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Out of Many, Más
Imagining a U.S. Latino Political Audience

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Out of Many, Más
Imagining a U.S. Latino Political Audience

by

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Dedication

For my family

– And the many families history has forgotten on both sides of the border.

Acknowledgements

Writing is a profoundly solitary experience. Regardless of the ideas of other thinkers you wrestle with or the audience you imagine you are speaking to, writing begins and ends with you sitting in front of the computer for seemingly endless hours. I can humbly say however that I have never felt alone throughout this endeavor of writing my thesis.

I immediately think of my family when I reflect on those who have helped me get to this point. The issues I discuss in this thesis work are deeply personal to me. I am the descendent of Mexican immigrants to the United States. I carry their names. They came to this land of promise to secure a better life for their children and generations to follow. I can barely comprehend the years of hard work in the smelters, department stores, homes and foreign battlefields they endured. *Esto es para ustedes – Ramon Daniel Vasquez, Socorro Vasquez, Arturo Soto y Julieta Soto.* Their children - my parents - sought out their dream in the United States, on *la frontera*. In a classical sociological meeting of destiny – my mother, Norma Vasquez, and my father, Hector Soto met in a bowling league in El Paso, TX. In that beautiful border community they raised my sister and I in a loving home where every hope and dream was encouraged. Mom and Dad, you provided me with everything a son could ask for, this is also for you. I of course, cannot forget to thank my intellectual sparring partner since childhood, my brilliant and sharp-witted sister Rebecca. This is for you also.

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reflection for Latino youth like myself when I first joined as a shy 16 year old. I must also thank many of my closest friends who I have met though my years affiliated with NHI. The marathon conversations into the early morning in college dorms and arguments over meals helped shape my intellectual formation over the last 8 years. Among the many, I must especially thank Rafael Hernandez, Andres Bernal, Nayeli Garza, Karen Gaytan, Christopher Monsivais, Astrid Fuentes, Paola Hernandez, Zach Gonzalez, Valeria Alvarado, Gabriela Morales, Victoria Ochoa, Shelby Melendez and Hector H. Lopez for their conversations and friendship throughout the years.

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Finally I must thank God for the infinite blessings of family, friends and mentors I have enjoyed over the last few years. As a Catholic I am reminded that I must not "conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" in Romans 12:2. Through faith and love, I hope to live a life driven to improve the lives of others and follow the example of those acknowledged here. *Saludos.*

May 8th, 2015.

Abstract

Out of Many Más:

Imagining a U.S. Latino Political Audience

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U.S. Latino political integration is a theme that has entered the public agenda in recent years, advanced by both professionals and scholars. However, most political actors have ignored the tremendous racial and socio-economic differences in American Latino communities. Many political actors have made fundamental assumptions about what constitutes the American Latino experience, including overemphasizing the language and other cultural similarities of these populations while disregarding their different experiences of race and class. This thesis analyzes how political actors, including American Presidents, Latino civic organizations, Spanish media and Latino youth, have constructed Latino pan-ethnicism through their rhetoric. To investigate this question, a multi-method analysis of rhetoric and political communication directed towards or about U.S. Latinos was conducted. Data indicates that official participants in U.S. Latino racial formation, Presidents and Civic Organizations, are rapidly constructing pan-ethnic

rhetoric while other non-official participants challenge and deconstruct pan-ethnic rhetoric. The normative value of this thesis represents a contribution to the question of Latino inclusion in the United States, as well as complicating traditional notions of assimilation and political acculturation. Finally, this work challenges American Latinos to critically reflect on their own identity formation, and how they may begin to reclaim it.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Introduction

The creation of a singular Latino in the United States is an ongoing project in contemporary American political discourse. This effort is political, as this project aims to construct a distinct electoral entity and a voting bloc to be spoken to and organized. This is a consciousness-creating initiative, taking place on a national scale, to unify groups of people into a marketable entity. This undertaking ties together people of different racial and national backgrounds into an imagined community of Latinos, so when a politician or pundit speaks about "Latino issues," Latinos imagine they are being spoken to. This is a media campaign, because it is occurring through multiple methods of transmission, through Spanish language news, campaign literature and new media. In short, this is a communication project that uses political, economic, and cultural discourses to imagine and create the American Latino.

This thesis will answer to the following research question, *how have political actors constructed (or deconstructed) Latino pan-ethnicism through their rhetoric and communication? Latino Pan-ethnicism* refers to the subversion of the ethnic, racial, and national difference between Latino communities throughout Latin America and the transcendence of a singular abstract "Latino" identity. This thesis will take an interdisciplinary approach, using a Media Studies, Political Communication and Latina/o Studies field framework. This study will integrate literature on the Public Sphere, Racial Formation Theory, the racialization of Latinos, Citizenship studies, and Latino rhetorical styles. This thesis will also be multi-method, employing the qualitative methods of thematic analysis and the quantitative methods of content analysis. Finally this thesis will

conclude with analysis of the data, future research directions and the normative implications of a new racial ideology for American Latinos.

This investigation is prompted by a surge of attention in the political mainstream by pundits and politicians towards the "changing demographics" of the nation and the so-called "emergence" of Latinos. Both major political parties in the United States, Democrats and Republicans, have devoted significant time and energy to capture Latinos in their coalition. Following the 2012 elections, party documents from the GOP highlighted the need to pursue certain policy reforms like immigration reform and reducing the volume of nativist rhetoric among the party's most conservative members to appeal to Latinos. Following the 2014 elections, similar party documents from the Democrats reveal a similar stated strategy of further appealing to Latinos, especially Latinas, to expand their "Obama coalition."

To the people who have lived close to Latino communities and study them, this surge in attention seems peculiar. Latinos of many different origins have lived and democratically participated in the United States for decades. Mexicans living in the American southwest suddenly became American citizens following the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe, Puerto Ricans were American citizens for most of the 20th century and many immigrant groups settled throughout the country many years before the post-NAFTA wave of immigration. Yet, this recent surge in interest is nonetheless noteworthy. It is noteworthy not because "Latinos have arrived" but rather because of the political and economic capital that now is at stake. American Latinos are now recognized by the mainstream as both a viable electoral community and as a powerful marketable

entity. For many, recognition by the American mainstream can be confused as progress especially when Latino communities have often been in the background of the country's imagination. The purpose of this work is in part to challenge both the mainstream's conception and rhetoric of Latinos and also disrupt the well-intentioned but often misguided optimism of Latino activists about their status in the USA.

This work attempts an intervention at multiple levels in this ongoing Latino project. First, this work attempts to contextualize the surge of interest in a larger history of Latino communities in the United States. It also attempts to theorize about the rhetorical formations being developed around pan-ethnic communication. Finally, this work attempts to situate pan-ethnic Latino rhetoric within larger constellations of race and power in American political economy.

This study is structured as follows; the first sections introduce the theoretical frame of the investigation. The most recent philosophical and social science work on race, Latinos and other areas of interest are divided broadly into four areas; the racial formation of U.S. Latinos, the positioning of Latinos in the public sphere, the political history of Latinos in the USA and attempts toward a definition of pan-ethnicism. Subsequently, the work delves into four data sets oriented around the central question of this thesis work; the rhetoric of American Presidents, Latino Civic Organizations, Spanish Language Newspapers, and Latino youth on twitter. Finally, the study concludes by answering the central research question of this thesis and offering further directions for research.

Theoretical Framework

Professor of Latino Studies, Juan Flores says, "The history of Latinos is already in midnarrative?" What does this mean? For those who study Latino communities in the United States, there is an increasing recognition that Latino identity is not completely of "our own making." The field of Latino studies itself, somewhat a relatively new and contentious conjoining of Mexican-American, Puerto Rican and Latin American fields in many departments in universities across the country, is ambivalent towards its own name. Flores' comment captures this ambivalence, in other words, does the field shape and form understanding of Latino identity or is it subject to large-scale political-economic forces and therefore must accept pan-ethnic Latino identity as a reality? Even as the field may adopt a critical opposition to the term Latino, would there be a willingness in the field to abandon the term Latino itself? What would be the alternative? In this respect, Flores makes a fundamental concession and intellectual pivot when he says the field must "fully recognizing that the very terms 'Latino' and 'Hispanic' are first of all imposed labels, ideological hoodwinks aimed at tightening hegemony and capturing markets, the Latino concept is still useful, if not indispensible, for charting out an area of contemporary intellectual inquiry and political advocacy."

This work operates from a similar mindset. The term "Latino" is laden with ideological and hegemonic connotations, yet in many ways it remains the best term in the vocabulary of scholars who are focused on this subject. This work thus operates from a perspective that Latino identity is not a fixed concept, but rather a battlefield where it's meaning is both being constructed and challenged by a variety of political actors.

RACIAL FORMATION OF U.S. LATINOS

Rodriguez (1999) posits an ongoing attempt to construct a panethnic, denationalized, and racialized Latino entity in the United States. Before covering the motivations and outcomes of the attempt to construct this entity, it is incumbent to delve into each of these macro-political processes and investigate their meaning and affect. *Latino Pan-ethnicism* refers partly to the subversion of the ethnic difference between communities throughout Latin America and the transcendence of a "Latino" identity. Rodriguez argues that:

> The production and dissemination of the notion of Latino panethnicity (the core of which is the elimination of national origin and racial differences) in Hispanic marketing and commercial representation since 1980 has erased the distinct immigration histories as well as the adaptation and settlement patterns of the three principal Latin American immigrant groups in the United States. Underlying these are class differences: the 1960s wave of Cuban immigrants was largely middle class and educated, with many professionals in the group, whereas Puerto Rican and Mexican immigrants tended to be working class, with many menial laborers among them (22)

Pan-ethnic Latino identity is an abstraction, where difference is minimized and similarities are deployed for political and economic benefit. The Spanish language serves as the primary signifier of panethnic abstraction in the United States. Specifically, "from a marketing perspective, the Spanish language is what makes the Hispanic audience efficient" (18). This efficiency guarantees advertising and audience construction utilizing the Spanish language exclusively targets Latinos. A priori conceptualizations of Latino panethnicity prominently trace their intellectual heritage to the writings of Mexican philosopher José Vasconcelos and his concept of *La Raza Cosmica.* The Cosmic Race, in

English, refers to eventual *mestizaje* or mixing of all peoples. Particularly, Vasconcelos argues that the people of Latin America, partially Iberian colonizer, partially colonized indigenous and partially enslaved African aesthetically represent the first racially transcendent people. However, mestizaje as a national project of Mexico is problematic as it erases the violence of colonialism that led to the mixing of peoples Vasconcelos celebrates. In a similar vein, current U.S. Latino pan-ethnicism also minimizes, if not completely erases, difference.

Denationalization refers to a process in which the sending country's (México, Colombia, La Republica Dominicana, etc.) national identity is shed in order to partially assimilate and create "U.S. Latinos." Rodriguez here comments that "the production of Latino journalism -- news that is purposefully and strategically created for U.S. residents of Latin American descent symbolically denationalizes Latinos, as it renationalizes them as U.S. Hispanics." (15) However, while nationalization as Americans envisions Latinos as "supportive of U.S. society's structures and norms, and yet also apart from it, preserving a distinct Latino identity" (17) their nationalization is constructed as a minority group within U.S. society, and are thus constituted "as marginal members" (22).

Finally, the *racialization* of United States Latinos refers to the disregard of racial difference highly present in Latin America and the process of constituting Latinos in the United States as a racial group along the lines of White and Black. Here Rodriguez comments, "Similarly, race (and racial categorizing) is also the product of social processes. The conceptualization of U.S. people of Latin American descent as a race

(think of the phrase 'Blacks and Hispanics.') erases the multiracial and multicultural heritage of these communities -- both north and south of the Rio Grande." (18)

The conceptualization of race is closely tied to modernity and its associated political and socio-cultural shifts. Howard Winant's scholarship in Racial Formation Theory serves multiple purposes in outlining (1) the historical origins of race, (2) the sociological study of race in the height of modernity and (3) the potential for post-colonial, post-historical conceptualizations of race. Winant begins by defining race as a "a concept that signifies and symbolizes sociopolitical conflicts and interests in reference to different types of human bodies." However, this statement is qualified by two statements; first, the "selection of these particular human features for purposes of racial signification is always and necessarily a social and historical process," and that "there is no biological basis for distinguishing human groups along the lines of race." (172) Winant closely ties the "world historical processes" such as the emergence of enlightenment rationality, nation-state building, colonialism and the beginnings of global political economy to race conceptualization.

The post-World War II landscape induced a major wave of decolonization of the global south and in turn, also signaled the massive migration of people to global north and particularly its urban centers. The city-space thus became an important site where demands of political, social and economic inclusion were made. Yet, as the world entered the twenty-first century, ethnic, class and national notions of race are increasingly being challenged from multiple vertical and lateral social forces. Here, Winant outlines the case

for a new racial theory, which "must address the persistence of racial classification and stratification in an era officially committed to racial equality and multiculturalism" (180). Winant summarizes emerging Racial Formation Theory via the following criteria;

> (I) It views the meaning of race and the content of racial identities as unstable and politically contested; (II) It understands racial formation as the intersectional conflict of racial "projects" that combine representational and discursive elements with structural/institutional ones; (III) It sees these intersections as iterative sequences of interpretations (articulations) of the meaning of race that are open to many types of agency, from the individual to the organizational, from the local to the global (181).

Recent research presents several critical perspectives on emergent panethnicism among United States Latinos. Puerto-Rican and Dominican youth in New York City see the rise of Latino media as positive developments while simultaneously express frustration with the cultural distance presented in Latino media which in their view overwhelmingly presents Mexicans as the Latino standard (Dávila 2000). Other scholarship has challenged the primacy of Cuban, Puerto Rican and Mexican representation in U.S. Latino media by examining recent diasporas of people from Argentina and how it "complicates the notion of either a essentialistic or pluralistic" panethnicity (Mayer 2004). Finally, surveys conducted by the Hispanic Pew Research Center indicates that 51% of U.S. Latinos identify with their national origin rather than a panethnic identity, 69% cannot identify an overarching "Hispanic culture" and 51% don't see themselves fitting into standard racial categories. Finally, and perhaps ironically, only 14% prefer the term "Latino" as an identifier (Taylor, et al. 2012).

Julie A. Dowling in *Mexican Americans and the Question of Race* documents these complex dynamics at play in the ways Mexican Americans identify racially. Importantly, her methodology uncovers how Latinos themselves identify and the rationale behind identifications. She argues, "identity construction involves a dynamic process whereby persons both receive messages about race from others and also actively interpret these experiences and create their own claims regarding their identity" (9). Dowling demonstrates the fluidity of racial identification for Latinos depending upon legal and other social circumstances, so that Latinos can be "white" in some instances and "other" in different circumstances. Indeed there remains a tension between Mexican-Americans and their racial formation as legally white and socially as a non-white "other."

For example, Dowling interviewed Miguel Gonzalez of Mission, TX and when she asked why he marked "white" on his census form for race, he responded, "'cause I'm American, right?" Dowling thus argues the "link between whiteness and American identity is a powerful one." (23) Indeed, Dowling consistently finds that not only have some Mexican-Americans have internalized the association of whiteness with Americaness, but have also adopted the racial rhetoric of the white mainstream, where they believe "calling attention to racial differences and organizing based on race perpetuates racial division." (25)

This rhetorical formation is know as color-blind ideology, theorized by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva in *Racism Without Racists.* (2010) Bonilla-Silva identifies color-blind ideology and its resulting rhetorical formations as the dominant racial attitude among

White Americans. Whereas the ugly prejudice of the majority of American history has become taboo and outward displays of racism and hate are generally unacceptable (even leading to prominent people losing their positions) white Americans claim to "not see race." Yet, as racism continues to persist, this presents a problem. For adherents of color-blind ideology the continued persistence of racism is not due to systematic and institutional injustice but rather those who "keep playing the race card." (1) Color-blind ideology thus has a pernicious effect of undergirding racism while leaving *less* room for anti-racist movements to affect change because racism's effects are less tangible.

Bonilla-Silva argues that color-blind ideology explains the persistence of political and economic inequality among racial groups by blaming minorities for their position in America. According to him, "whites rationalize minorities' contemporary status as the product of market dynamics, naturally occurring phenomena, and blacks' imputed cultural limitations." (2). White Americans can wash their hands of their role in racial inequality and blame the contemporary status of Blacks and Latinos to their culture of "laziness" and "manana, manana, manana." Thus while our current era is not one of complete outright prejudice and segregation, the absence of these ugly parts of racism do not preclude the racial formation of Latinos happening at all. Indeed, the conflation of all Latinos to the figure of the undocumented day laborer in the minds of white Americans works hand in hand with the essentializing of a singular Latino identity.

THE POSITIONING OF U.S. LATINOS IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

The public sphere as a concept, introduced by Habermas and updated by countless others, provides a useful framework for understanding political communication in a liberal deliberative democracy such as the United States. Critically, the historiographical Habermasian conception of the public sphere from Grecian city-state to Bourgeois society to contemporary society outlines who can and cannot participate in the public sphere. This distinction is foundational to the American Latino inquiry into the public sphere because citizenship is barrier of access to participate in the public sphere. Latinos are rhetorically constructed as foreigners, regardless of their actual citizenship status (Rocco 2004).

Citizenship is an abstraction deployed by the nation-state to demarcate who can participate in governance. The granting of citizenship is not just a legal process, but also a social and cultural process. Understanding citizenship as a concept in flux also allows for critical inquiry into who is left out. Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* posits that "members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." American Latinos however are absent from the mainstream image of communion.

The construction of Latinos, especially Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, as foreigners prompts Leo Chavez's scholarship in *The Latino Threat* in which he identifies the Latino Threat Narrative as a dominant discourse about Latinos in political communication. Chavez defines the Latino Threat Narrative as the idea that "Latinos are

not like previous immigrant groups, who ultimately became part of the nation." Instead, Latinos are constructed as a threat to the American "way of life," because of their rhetorically constructed foreignness, illegality, refusal to assimilate and exceptional fertility. This discourse is ultimately deployed to limit full interaction by American Latinos in the public sphere and legitimize the participation of white Americans who are divinely endowed with the rights and privileges of the state by the creator.

The Latino Threat Narrative and citizenship inquiry evoke of the idea of hegemony by Antonio Gramsci. Hegemony is the dominant way of thinking and talking about "common" attitudes and values. The dominant way of thinking of course supports the constitution of the nation-state and the class (economic) interests that rely upon the status quo. Pushing Latinos towards the margins both economically and culturally allows not only for expulsion from the public sphere, but also in the private spheres of business where Latinos are viewed as under skilled, low value laborers.

The insidious and pervasive nature of this discourse even extends to the ways Latinos attempt to represent themselves in the public sphere. Undocumented students petitioning for passage of the DREAM Act and other similar legislation often argue they are "American in an all but strict legal sense." Through their rhetoric, Latino advocates of the DREAM Act fashion themselves as cultural and social citizens of the United States, even if they are not legal citizens. Inherent in this discourse is the assumption that Latinos can adopt the American mainstream culture and said adoption would be received approvingly by white America.

Hector Amaya in *Citizenship Excess* theorizes "that citizenship is inherently a process of uneven political capital accumulation and that unevenness follows ethno-racial lines." Amaya's theory is particularly useful in understanding Latino political communication because it integrates race and citizenship as contributory discursive formations. Specifically Citizenship Excess "is a political and media theory" that helps to explain persistent "racial inequality as the product of the nation-state and the political, cultural and legal systems that sustain it," and explains why Latinos "are the target of so much ethnic resentment and hate by a large portion of the citizenry and by mainstream politicians, media, and law" (Amaya 2-3).

The Habermasian conception of the public sphere is often misrepresented in contemporary thinking. Writing in the preface to the 1991 edition, Thomas McCarthy of Northwestern University argues Habermas noted "the contradiction between the liberal public sphere's constitutive catalog of 'basic rights of man' and their de facto restriction to a certain class of men." McCarthy further argues Habermas tied the end of the liberal public sphere to the "development of capitalism," which expanded the public "beyond to the bourgeoisie to include groups that were systematically disadvantaged by the workings of the free market" (McCarthy xii).

The 2006 controversies surrounding immigration reform in the U.S. are excellent examples of the use of racial appeals and embedded racism in the contemporary public sphere. Charlton McIlwain and Stephen Caliendo in *Race Appeal: How Candidates Invoke Race in U.S. Political Campaigns* devote a chapter to the 2006 immigration controversies as a case study. The central thesis of Race Appeal is political

communication has moved away from overt racist appeals towards a softer and more subtle type of racial appeal. Candidates now can evoke race in the minds of voters without explicitly mentioning race, think of the use of the words "urban, criminal, underserving poor," in campaign communication directed towards white voters. Conducting an image and rhetorical analysis of political advertisements McIlwain and Caliendo found a consistent use of criminal imagery (often showing people jumping a fence), and rhetoric that emphasized the "masses" or "millions" of immigrants "invading" America that ultimately threatened "our way of life." The racial appeals in the 2006 immigration controversies evoke the Latino Threat Narrative mentioned earlier and the nativism documented by Higham. Featured below is an example of some a striking use of racial appeal, this particular image coming from an advertisement used by Republican Sharron Angle in her 2010 bid to unseat Senator Harry Reid of Nevada.

Figure 1: "Thanks, Pal" Political Advertisement. S*harron Angle Campaign*

Bruce Bimber in his book *Information and American Democracy* argues the United States is currently in a decentralized information regime, meaning the flow of information in the public sphere is not tightly controlled by state or corporate actors and institutions. The nature and structure of the Internet, and resulting abundance of media choice, contribute to this disorganized information flow. The sections following this add on to current thinking about the decentralized, disorganized public sphere by introducing the unprecedented rise of Spanish language media and young people's engagement with twitter to further complicate the notion of a universal public sphere.

It is fairly obvious, if not explicitly documented; the predominant language used in American political communication is English. Thus, how to begin to account for (and theorize) political communication when there exists a sizable population who derive their news and opinion from a growing corps of Spanish language journalists? And beyond language, there is also a dissonance between English and Spanish language news in respect to structure and representation.

Peter Dahlgren in "The Internet, Public Spheres, and Political Communication: Dispersion and Deliberation" identifies three main components of a contemporary public sphere, the structural, representational and interactional. Dahlgren also offers his definition of the public sphere as, "a constellation of communicative spaces in society that permit the circulation of information, ideas, debates— ideally in an unfettered manner—and also the formation of political will (i.e., public opinion)" (148).

Dahlgren defines structure as the "formal institutional features," of a public sphere, which include "media organizations, their political economy, ownership, control, regulation, and issues of their financing, as well as the legal frameworks defining the freedoms of—and constraints on—communication" (149). Structurally, the English and Spanish language media in the United States are almost identical. There are large media organizations (often owned by the same corporate conglomerate) such as *NBC, CNN,* and *the New York Times* that produce English language news and *Univision, Telemundo,* and *La Opinion* that produce Spanish language news. In addition, the Internet also affords alternative media in both languages to flourish on social media, blogs and smaller news outlets.

English and Spanish language news begins to differ in representation, which Dahlgren defines as the "output of media" (149). While the majority of English language news is directed towards a general audience, Spanish language news is singularly directed towards U.S. Latinos.

Another important dimension of U.S. Latino public sphere interaction is the so-called "digital divide." The divide is the "gap between those with access to key communications technologies and those without access" (Brown, Campbell, Ling 2011). Data from the Pew Hispanic Center indicates the access divide is closing; Internet use has increased 14 percentage points between 2009 and 2012 among American Latinos from 64% to 78%. Increased mobile phone use, aided in part by more sophisticated feature innovation and affordable pricing, has played a pivotal role in closing the gap. 86% of

Latinos report owning a cellphone, along with 49% who report owning a smartphone. These levels are equivalent to – or higher – than other population groups. Importantly, 76% of Latinos who access the Internet report their point of access is their mobile phone (Lopez, Barrera & Patten 2013). However within the Latino community there remains some access divides, most of which are fairly intuitive. Youth, higher income and education levels positively correlate with access. Importantly, among Latinos who do not access the Internet, over two thirds are foreign born.

In sum, these finding support Dahlgren's assessment of the contemporary public sphere as highly destabilized, primarily supporting his points that "increased sociocultural heterogeneity" and the weakened "significance of traditional national borders" (150). Dahlgren concludes by offering his perspective that "the Internet is at the forefront of the evolving public sphere, and if the dispersion of public spheres generally is contributing to the already destabilized political communication system, specific counter public spheres on the Internet are also allowing engaged citizens to play a role in the development of new democratic politics" (160).

THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF LATINOS IN THE UNITED STATES

Historically, Latinos in the United States have experienced uneven applications of race. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ceded a large part of México to the United States following the Mexican- American War, made provisions for Mexican citizens living in the newly ceded U.S. to become American citizens by granting "whiteness" according to Hector Amaya. Yet, "the great majority of Mexicans did not enjoy the social

and legal benefits of whiteness and instead suffered from the systematic erosion of all rights," over time writes Amaya (16-18). The unevenness of race and citizenship extends to Puerto Ricans (who are granted literal second-class citizenship as a colonial territory of the United States) and Cubans (who are granted full citizenship as soon as they set foot in the United States) in diametric ways. The conditions of citizenship for Puerto Ricans and Cuban are obviously racialized as well; Cubans have a more distinct European aesthetic, while Puerto Ricans are racially ambiguous.

Martha Menchaca in *Naturalizing Mexican Immigrants: A Texas History* dutifully documents the uneven applications of race Mexican immigrants to Texas experienced. Depending upon the political and economic circumstances of state of Texas, the United States and foreign relations to Mexico, immigrants were racialized in vastly different ways. Menchaca argues "dominant groups attitudes in the United States have been shaped by international politics between Mexico and the United States, particularly in such matters as race and immigration policy (9). While some Mexicans who came into the newly incorporated state of Texas were legally considered white, they were often treated as second-class citizens socially and politically. In addition, the applications of race were distributed along class lines. Land owning Mexican-Americans (the few that remained) and those who married into the white elite were granted "honorary whiteness," while the vast majority of Mexican-American workers were not, and remained unequal. Yet as international relations between Mexico and the United States changed following the American Civil War, Mexican-American's status in Texas was impacted. Reconstruction policies implemented in Texas by Republicans largely benefited

Mexican-Americans along with African-Americans. However, once reconstruction was halted, and conservative segregationist Democrats returned to power, Mexican-Americans suffered many of the same ill effects as African-Americans did.

The subsequent industrialization of the United States began to require tremendous amounts of energy and following the discovery of oil in Mexico, large American conglomerates partnered with corrupt Mexican government officials to privatize and extract oil from Mexico. This period produced relative good will for a time between the two nations, and Mexican immigration to Texas slowed dramatically. In addition, the first generation of Mexican-Americans born in Texas after annexation began to situate themselves economically in the South Texas and enjoyed some independence. However, this period of relative good will would come to an end as the Mexican Revolution began and sent thousands of displaced peoples across the border in search of safety. The sudden influx and chaos near the border of Texas reignited nativist sentiment among whites, which is not dissimilar to the sentiment a century later in the late 2000's. The Mexican Revolution brought a whole new generation of Mexican immigrants into the United States, many of whom were received with hostility while at the same time welcomed into the arms of big business as less expensive workers in the field and factory. The end of the Revolution again brought relative racial calm into the United States.

Following the nationalization of Mexican oil fields by reform President Lazaro Cardenas in the 1930's, sentiment towards Mexicans again turned sour. This trend of relative calm followed by hostility followed by calm is a consistent trend in the history of Mexican-Americans in the United States. Post WWII served as an era of relative peace,

while the post-NAFTA era sparked a renewal of hostility towards Latinos in the U.S., even those who were not Mexican-American or Immigrants. The Civil Rights Era protests and reform by the United Farm Workers, Cesar Chavez and many other activists remain a unique moment in time. The 1960's exist as a time where the vast majority of Americans became acutely aware of race and the inequities faced by minorities in America. The telecasting of violence against peaceful protesters in the South for the first time alarmed many moderate Americans and lawmakers into racial consciousness. These explicit acts of racial violence spurred the passage of the first major civil rights legislation by the federal government since the Civil War. Indeed, President Lyndon Baines Johnson knew from is past as a school teacher in Cotulla, Texas that many of the inequities African-Americans faced also afflicted Mexican-Americans and Latinos. It was during this time the farmworkers movement in California spurred a larger "Chicano" movement across the American Southwest.

The Chicano movement is notable for not only the real political and economic gains it accomplished, but for the changes in racial self-identity in conceptualized among Mexican-Americans. The Chicano movement deliberately invoked indigenous aesthetics and iconography in its political communication. As a result, Mexican-Americans began to identify as indigenous, something quite uncommon given the Mexican national project of Mestizaje. The subsequent formation of the Raza Unida Party in Texas became of the first significant efforts to organize Latinos politically as a distinct group. In 1972 the Raza Unida Party ran their first major statewide candidate for office when Ramsey Muniz ran for Governor of Texas. They produced typical campaign literature such as buttons,

bumper stickers and push cards. First, the most surprising typical political communication of the pamphlet was the deployment of Muniz's collegiate football past. Politicians typically invoke sports along a gendered discourse of strength and virility, yet the Muniz campaign's invocation of sports in this pamphlet is instead framing a discourse of "all-Americaness" and mainstream appeal. Placed next to a picture of Muniz with his wife and young daughter intends to invoke mainstream respectability.

Given these mainstream visual representations of Muniz, it is just as surprising to read the actual text of the pamphlet, which advocates positions on issues generally outside of conventional American two party political thought. Instead, these policies reflect the real socio-political positions of most Chicanos in Texas at the time. Chicanos were either ignored or taken for granted by the political powers of the time. In this respect, the issues advocated by the Raza Unida Party are appropriate given the population they represented.

Finally, the most surprising atypical political communication in the document occurs in the opening paragraph under the heading "Why am I a candidate?" Here the documents quotes Dr. Ralph Lynn, a professor from Baylor University, who says "In the not too distant past, we – the social, political and economic insiders who run society – we stacked the cards so the poor, whether black or white or brown, could hardly participate in politics." This is not something usually seen in campaign communication, an acknowledgment of the real political power at play in an election. Conventional campaign communication usually strives to do the opposite, convince voters they have the true agency in American democracy. This document actually contains an element of

radical (alternative) media as it contains a "negation of negation" in its rhetoric. (Fuchs 2010) Conventional politics negates the reality of elite power and creates an illusion of agency, while this documents negates that negation of reality by exposing true power (and racial) relations.

The legacy of the Chicano Movement is a racial order that remained mostly in tact until the passage of NAFTA in the 1990's. By deregulating trade between Mexico, the United Stats and Canada, and also forcing neo-liberal changes to the progressive 1910 Mexican constitution, the poor subsistence farming class of Mexico was literally overrun by cheap American food. Without a means to live, many impoverished Mexican farmers migrated en masse to the United States to work in low-wage service industry or agricultural jobs. For most, the journey was also outside of the legal process for immigration and thus many immigrated without documentation.

These historical forces shape how Latinos understand their identity as well. Returning to Dowling, she finds "Mexican Americans resist racial 'othering,' in an effort to be accepted as fully American. Yet, despite their efforts to fit within the boundaries of whiteness, continued experiences with racial profiling and discrimination reinforce their status as racial "others" (7). The important takeaway from these accounts is that Latinos receive racial messaging from a multitude of sources; the state, media narratives and other Latinos while demonstrating agency in the way they self identify racially. Finally, Dowling notes that organizations like LULAC have deployed whiteness as a strategy to fight discrimination (11), which prompts this investigation into how Latino civic organizations construct pan-ethnic rhetoric as a means for collective action. These calls

for action are situated in larger racial discourses surrounding Latinos in the United States.

TOWARDS PAN-ETHNICISM

Racial formation is no easy process to track; Michael Omi and Howard Winant call the "making up [of] people…a process fraught with confusion, contradiction and unintended consequences" in their seminal work *Racial Formation in the United States* (105). Yet as noted many times before, through a great "human sacrifice" slavery and genocide, the United States was created as a "racially organized social and political system" (245). This seeming contradiction of the illusiveness of race and its unyielding permanence in our American reality make the analytical process of understanding emerging racial phenomena challenging. For the purposes of this study, the claim that "Latinos are arriving," is fraught with layers of meaning, at times seemingly contradictory. Perfectly reasonable observers could challenge this claim and counter "Latinos have been in the United States for decades." Others may say "Latinos will assimilate just like every other immigrant group" or say "Latinos and their unwillingness to shed their culture and become Americans challenge our national identity." All of these claims, arguments and counter arguments are important for what they signify; *a potential transformation of the black-white racial order that has existed in the United States since its founding.*

However, history cannot be ignored. Neither can the flexibility and vital necessity of the black-white racial order be ignored. A century ago, an entirely different set of "new immigrants" arrived in the United States from Southern and Eastern Europe. Their ancestors living in America today understand themselves as white-Americans, yet for the

immigrants who came to American from 1890-1940, their racial status was dramatically less certain.

In *Working Towards Whiteness*, David Roediger traces the racial formation of the "new immigrants" who came from Italy, Poland and other countries to the United States in the early 20th century. A case is made that the "new immigrants" were not just assimilated into the American mainstream, as a casual reading of history might suggest, but were also "whitened" after a long process of political, social and economic strives. The early 20th century saw just as much racial disorder as today – as experts in 1888 concluded, "there were between 2 and 63 races" (11). The serious scientific classifying of race was of course not a mistake, the white elite of the time directly benefitted from denying citizenship, rights and job to "inferior" peoples.

As the generations of "new immigrants" came to America they encountered a racial system unlike their experience in Europe. Indeed, for many immigrants, the first consideration of race and racism came after they immigrated to the United States; racism was truly foreign and peculiarly American. Italian-Americans quickly adopted the "prejudices of white men toward African-Americans in order to insure their own standing" (117). The clear advantages of whiteness in the eyes of immigrants quickly trained their own conceptions of white supremacy, racism, and petitioning to join.

Through political and economic efforts such as New Deal policies and unions, the "new immigrants" gradually became closer to white Americans and farther away from blacks and other "people of color." The final strike for whiteness occurred in the 1940's

and 1950's as the new immigrants fled to the suburbs in racial segregated neighborhoods and captured them in the tradition of white exclusion (234).

The parallels of racial formation of whiteness for a group of immigrants from Italy, Russia and other countries and the formation of Latinidad for a group of immigrants from Mexico, Cuba and other countries are useful, if inexact. Nevertheless, they reveal the malleability of race in the United States. The categorization of immigrants and their descendants from Latin America, regardless of multiple differences, into a pan-ethnic Latino category is following a similar process as the "new immigrants" a century ago.

Jarvis and Connaughton note in their 2005 article, "Audiences *Implicadas e Ignoradas,"* there exists significant difference in U.S. Latino rhetoric. They note that, "just as scholars have called for an appreciation of the heterogeneity of ''Latinos'' in the United States, they have also begun to note the diversity of what may be called Latino rhetoric" (134). They identify two dominant rhetorical styles in the American Southwest, Chicano "activist" and assimilation style. They define Chicano activist rhetoric is a "discourse of cultural nationalism and ethnic pride" (134). It also is characterized by the blending of English and Spanish, references to familiar cultural artifacts such as religion, mythology, food, heritage, etc., and the symbolic unification of Mexican-Americans as a racial group. In contrast, assimilationist rhetoric articulates "that hard work within the established system would lead to progress for Mexican Americans and that Chicano militant rhetoric was no better than Anglo racist rhetoric because it demonized 'the other'" (135). Assimilationist rhetoric was often adopted by civic organizations, which

were characterized by using English names, using American symbols (the flag, the pledge, etc.), and requiring due paying membership. A third rhetorical style, pan-ethnic style, has emerged since the civil rights era rhetorical battles. Pan-ethnic style positions itself transcending the activist/assimilatory conflict; it is a triangulated third way discourse. Whereas activist rhetoric is reactionary, pan-ethnic rhetoric is constructivist. Whereas assimilatory rhetoric is conciliatory, pan-ethnic rhetoric is visionary. Emerging pan-ethnic rhetoric theory is summed up in table 1.

Table 1: U.S. Latino Rhetorical Styles

Rhetorical Style	Race and Nation	Geographic Focus	Grouping	Time Orientation	Who can use it?
Activist	Mestizo, Indigenous, and Nationless	The Borderlands, American Southwest	Fight the system, outsiders	Past Oriented, Historical Grievances	Chicanos, Mexican-Americans
Assimilatory	Hispanic, America	The United States, Washington D.C.	Use the system, insiders	Present Oriented, Policy	Hispanics Americans, Citizens
Pan-Ethnic	Latino, Multi-national	Hemispheric, Global	Create new systems of power	Future Oriented, Growth	Everyone

Critical to this study is the concept of second and third personas. Scholars of rhetoric have advanced the notion that, (1) speakers imagine an audience abstraction and that (2) said abstraction necessarily excludes certain, often marginalized, people. Black in *The Second Persona* (1970) argues that a text should be analyzed beyond the time and place it was presented. Texts contain assumptions about the audience it is directed towards. Wander in *The Third Persona* further contributes by adding that texts also leave out groups in their audience construction. Thus texts can be scrutinized for who is not included in the audience.

The rhetorical styles outlined above are all engaged in audience construction of some sort. Additionally US Latino rhetorical styles also have the added complication of language. Monolingual use of English or Spanish creates unique barriers to audiences, even if they would otherwise be included in the audience construction. Rhetorical styles and audiences are summarized in table 2.

Table 2: U.S. Latino Rhetorical Styles and Personas

Rhetorical Style	**Implied 2nd persona**	**Absent 3rd persona**
Activist	Oppressed Mexican-Americans	Other nationalities, Puerto Ricans, Guatemalans, etc.
Assimilatory	Moderate Hispanics	Non-citizens, radicals
Pan-ethnic	All Latinos	Mono-lingual and racially ambiguous Latinos

Those left out in the emergent pan-ethnic style point to some the problematic characteristics inherent in a broad homogenizing refashioning of Latino communities.

Returning to *Racism without Racists,* Bonilla-Silva dedicates a final chapter to the "future racial stratification of the United States." In summary, he argues the explosion of Latinos "has already created a number of visible fractures in the United States that seem to be shifting the racial terrain." (177) Specifically, he argues the emergence of Latinos has disrupted the traditional way of thinking about race in the United States (black versus white) and will prompt the formation of a triracial hierarchal system similar to those found in Latin America and the Caribbean.

According to Bonilla-Silva, the triracial order will comprise whites at the top, "honorary whites" below them and the "collective black" at the bottom. (179) He speculates the white group will include traditional whites, new white immigrants and "totally assimilated white Latinos" and light skinned multi-racials. Honorary whites will include most light skinned groups of Latinos and Asian Americans while the collective black will include African-Americans along with dark-skinned Latinos and Asian Americans. Bonilla-Silva argues there are several foreseeable problems in this system beyond continuing to place whites at the top of the racial (and thus social and political) hierarchy. First, like in Latin American style triracial orders, the large middle buffers discontent between the lowest and highest racial class. This is similar to how many Americans, regardless of actual income or wealth, claim to be middle class because of the positive values associated with middle class identification. Secondly, this system can actually allow those in power to make claims that "we are all Americans" due to the complexity of the racial system and brush aside criticisms of inequity. Bonilla-Silva

argues this new racial system will ultimately serve as a "formidable fortress for white supremacy" where racial inequality remains while the space to fight it is restricted. (179)

Thus, here is the central problem and paradox in pan-ethnic Latino rhetoric and racial formation: its portends to represent an entire group of diverse and different people while ultimately only benefiting a light skinned, socially mobile elite at the top.

U.S. Presidents

Fundamental to this study is the position of the American President to shape ideas and influence people (Stromer-Galley 2014, Smith 2010). Eshbaugh-Soha and Balarezo in their 2013 article "The President on Spanish-Language Television News" take a descriptive look into how Telemundo and NBC portray the Presidency and its relation to Latinos. They find consistent portray of the president as an important figure but find Telemundo connects his actions to Latino issues. Along similar lines, Wallace in her 2012 article "It's Complicated: Latinos, President Obama, and the 2012 Election" explores the relationship between President Obama and US Latinos. It documents some of the rocky points in the relationship and sheds light into the political activity and negotiation Latinos undertake. In particular she notes there is significant tension towards President Obama on his administrations immigration policy.

These cited studies examine the President's relationship with US Latinos mediated through the news. The purpose of this study is to examine Presidential rhetoric when it is directed to Latino audiences or concerns Latino audiences. There continues to remain significant gaps in the academic literature on this area of inquiry. This sections positions the study of Presidential public papers within the larger context of the multiple pressures American Presidents face when making decisions regarding their political communications. Important quotes from public papers are highlighted in chronological order of administrations and paired with discussions using other media sources to contextualize the decisions of Presidents to evoke specific types of rhetoric towards or about Latinos.

METHODS

To investigate presidential rhetoric directed towards and about US Latinos, this article conducted an analysis of presidential public papers. Presidential public papers constitute any non-classified document or speech from the Eisenhower to Obama administration. These documents were drawn from the American Presidency Project archive at the University of California, Santa Barbara. A series of keywords were imputed into the search function in the archive and the sample was constituted from the returns (n=1231). Table 3 displays the keywords and the amounts of public paper returns.

Table 3: U.S. Presidents Public Papers Keyword Returns

Keyword	Returns
Hispanic	873
Latina/os	252
Mexican – American (Mexican American)	66
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)	17
Chicano	12
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)	11

The Presidency projects include the public papers since the George Washington administration. However, the keyword searches yielded a sample that begins with the John F. Kennedy administration. The bulk of returns are from the George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations. Public paper returns by president are shown in table 4.

Table 4: U.S. Presidents Public Papers Keyword Returns by President

President	Kennedy	Johnson	Nixon	Ford	Carter	Reagan	Bush	Clinton	Bush	Obama
Hispanic	0	1	1	13	59	99	58	404	125	113
Latina/o	0	0	0	0	4	1	2	93	60	92
Mexican American	2	8	3	3	10	2	3	7	14	14
LULAC	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	3	5	0
Chicano	0	0	0	2	5	1	0	2	2	0
NCLR	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	2	1
Total	3	11	4	19	78	103	65	515	208	220

Once the sample was constituted, this article conducted a thematic analysis of the texts returned. Thematic analysis is a qualitative method that interprets texts through an emerging theoretical framework (Guest, McQueen, Namey 2012). In particular, this article is analyzing texts *as proxies* for the imagined US Latino audiences constructed by American Presidents.

The process of thematic analysis outlined by Bernard and Ryan is followed here; (1) texts were closely scrutinized, (2) preliminary themes were identified, (3) overarching structures were conceptualized and (4) theoretical models were constructed. In addition, the nature of the texts necessitated considering structure and theory developing *over time* through the various Presidential administrations.

Following the thematic analysis, this section categorizes Presidential rhetoric along the major rhetorical styles outlined in the "towards pan-ethnicism" section. Some presidential rhetoric is classified as activist, assimilatory or as pan-ethnic, and several public papers can be classified along different categories in the same administration. Following this exploration, the specific uses of rhetoric are contextualized with the historical, political and personal factors that may have influenced the President's rhetoric. This analytic framework recognizes that Presidents are both products of history and shapers of history. Presidents are both products of the racial order they grew up, ran for office, and governs in while also having the power to reshape racial inequality and politics through policy. Presidents have the power to reimagine the racial language through their own rhetoric. This section operates from the perspective that the carefully worded public statements by Presidents, often vetted by senior political operatives and

advisors, are representations of the racial order they inherit and construct themselves. In particular, the emergence of Latinos in the United States presents Presidents with a unique moment in time where the racial politics of the nation are being reframed from black and white to a new, unpredictable order (or disorder). The selected pubic papers attempt to demonstrate Presidents wrestling with language about or towards Latinos. Care is taken to connect what may be a short line or paragraph in a public statement to larger a contextualization of certain President's histories and also subsequently connect statements and personal history to larger themes outlined in the overarching theoretical framework of this study.

RESULTS

Particularly interesting is how Presidents imagined Latino identity prior to the paradigm shift in the early 90's. In 1961 President Kennedy was asked why there were not any prominent Mexican Americans serving in his cabinet. He responded by stating that he has offered a position to an "American of Mexican extraction," which is unclear whether he meant a Mexican citizen living in the United State or an American of Mexican heritage. He then positioned any potential Mexican American serving in his cabinet as a "great reservoir of talent," who could work closely with Latin America. President Kennedy's rhetoric positions Latinos as foreigners. JFK appointed the first Mexican-American ambassador to a foreign country in 1961, appointing then El Paso Mayor Raymond Telles to serve in Costa Rica. According to *The Making of a Mexican American Mayor* by Mario T. Garcia, Telles had initially expressed reservations about taking the post and leaving El Paso, where he had been elected the first ever Mexican-

American mayor of major southwestern city and accomplished significant gains for the Latino communities in the city which had been dominated up until that point by a small white elite. Sitting in the White House, President Kennedy asked Telles "to realize that you'll be the first Mexican American appointed as an ambassador? If you do a good job, you're going to open the door for other Spanish-speaking candidates" (125). JFK's public papers and private conversation recounted by Telles demonstrate his understanding of Latinos as a "Spanish-speaking" people who could be used to connect to the countries of Latin America, which he felt could be at risk of converting to communism. Visiting Costa Rica in 1963, the President conceded in a speech to university students that the US "had not always applied its democratic principles to Latin America" (136). JFK, after persuading from Telles, also visited the San Jose Cathedral and a local children's hospital. Telles recounts that after the news of the assassination of President Kennedy were made public in Costa Rica, "people were out in the streets openly and loudly crying" (138). JFK viewed the appointment of the first Mexican-American ambassador as a strategic move to tighten ties with Latin America and safeguard against the spread of Communism.

The data indicates that the Johnson administration was more likely to use the term "Mexican-American" rather than Latino and Hispanic. This is based on his Texan roots and his experience teaching in Cotulla, Texas as a young man; an experience he often referred to when speaking towards Latinos. Speaking in El Paso, Texas following the return of the Chamizal National Park to México, Johnson said, "this is home country for me, as you know. When I talk with you about the problems and the potentials of the

Mexican-American, I am talking about people that I have known all of my life and people that I care about deeply. These people are proud people. They are strong people. They are people who are older in history than the United States of America itself." Johnson was undoubtedly the first American president to have significant lived experience around Latinos in the United States. Julian E. Zelizer in *The Fierce Urgency of Now*, a recent recounting of Johnson, Congress and the passage of the Great Society notes that his "students were the children of dirt-poor Mexican American farmworkers who couldn't afford to send them to school with lunch…and the town was rigidly segregated" (66). Indeed LBJ often saw Mexican Americans in Cotulla searching through garbage for fruit rinds to eat. Years later as President, LBJ found the Civil Rights Act stalled in Congress he met with civil rights leaders Martin Luther King Jr., James Farmer, Roy Wilkins and Whitney Young in the White House. Zelizer notes here that while the Civil Rights leaders expected little good news about the prospects of passing the bill from Johnson, he "surprised them…with his broad commitment to a transformation of race relations." LBJ explained to the leaders why the Civil Rights Act was just the beginning of his Great Society project and why "fighting poverty was an essential part of the civil rights struggle." Johnson's rhetoric towards Latinos in his El Paso speech was clearly founded upon his experiences with Mexican-Americans. Zelizer finally notes that LBJ understood that segregation did not singularly perpetuate racial inequality and "his views evolved from his own upbringing and work in Texas, where he had seen the impact of poverty on Mexican Americans" (93).

In 1974, President Nixon was the first to include a section in a State of the Union Address focused on Latino policy, however he referred to Latinos as the "Spanish-speaking population." This also represents the first instance of referring to a collective of Latinos beyond Mexican Americans. Nixon's audience abstraction is based on language, which produced some awkward phrasing such as, "nearly 3,800 Spanish surnamed Americans have been employed by the Federal Government." The use of Spanish as a shorthand for Latinos continued with the Ford and Carter administrations. President Ford, proclaiming National Hispanic Heritage Week, said that, "men and women of Hispanic origin-Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans and other Spanish Speaking Americans-have contributed significantly to the growth of America." Not only does Ford here use the term Hispanic to refer to national difference, but he also uses Spanish as a signifier of Latinos.

Interestingly, the term "Latino" appears in public papers from the Carter and Regan administrations. However, "Latino" only appeared in questions directed to the President from citizens or journalists. In responding to these questions, both Carter and Regan never reciprocate and use the word "Latino" in their responses. For example at a Question and Answer session with representatives of Hispanic media, President Carter was asked to respond to accusations from Latino groups about his immigration policy. Carter responded by discussing his administrations work with the Mexican government. Following the Carter and Regan administrations, the identifier Latino was used heavily by the Clinton, Bush and Obama administrations. American Presidents began referring to a pan-ethnic Latino identity consistently during the Clinton administration. The highest

numbers of returns for the keyword "Latino" are from the Clinton, Bush and Obama administrations (n=246, or 97.7% of all returns). Indeed, the first reference of Latinos as a distinct group comes from the second debate of the 1992 election between President Bush, then-Governor Clinton and businessman Perot. Clinton referred to Latinos as a distinct *racial group,* saying "this country is electing more and more African-Americans and *Latinos* and Asian-Americans who are representing districts that are themselves not necessarily of a majority of *their race*" [emphasis added]. Latino, rather than Hispanic, has now become the dominant discourse of the American presidency when referring to Latinos.

The Latino pan-ethnic rhetoric is unique as non-Latinos can deploy it, which of course includes American Presidents. This is contrasted against activist and assimilatory rhetoric, which are difficult to deploy by non-Latinos. Nevertheless, there remain some interesting examples of presidential rhetoric utilizing elements of activist and assimilatory rhetoric. At event commemorating the work of Cesar Chavez in 2012, President Obama closed his remarks with Chavez's familiar refrain of *Si se puede,* to which the audience responded in kind. However, Obama did not singularly focus his remarks towards Mexican-Americans, despite his use of activist rhetorical elements. He said earlier, "The recession we're fighting our way back from is still taking a toll, especially in Latino communities, which already faced higher unemployment and poverty rates," evoking pan-ethnic rhetoric. The use of activist rhetoric inside a larger theme of Latino issues by Obama symbolically places the 1960's era farmworker struggles and victories within a larger American Latino narrative.

In contrast, President George H.W. Bush in an address to the National Council of La Raza, a Latino civic organization that advocates for policy, stated his opposition to quotas in education. As outlined earlier, the focus on education and the need for Latinos to better themselves is a major characteristic of assimilatory rhetoric. Bush remarked, "we all know quotas aren't right. They are not fair. They divide society instead of bringing people together. And as leaders and representatives of the Hispanic-American community, I owe it to you to see that this legislation does not say to the young kids, you only fit in if you fit into a certain numbered quota. That is not the American dream." Bush in this example deploys assimilatory elements that are consistent with institutional conservative ideology.

While there were some rhetorical differences as exposed above, the data also revealed a striking similarity across Presidents: they all spoke about Latin American and (eventually) Latino contributions to the United States. The texts consistently appear from the Carter to Obama administrations, and serve as the best cases of texts where the President is presumed to be speaking to a primarily Latino audience. Cinco de Mayo commemorates the Mexican victory over French occupying forces at the battle of Puebla. Ironically, the day is primarily celebrated in the United States, rather than México. Recently, Cinco de Mayo celebrations have become larger events in the White House, often involving Mexican or Mexican-American musicians.

The first returns from a search for "Cinco de Mayo" all referenced the relationship between México and the United States. The statements of Ronald Regan and George H.W. Bush make no mention of Mexican-Americans. Clinton and Bush make

short one-sentence references to the value Mexican-Americans have added to the United States. For example, at the 2008 celebration George W. Bush remarked, “In America, we deeply value the culture and the contribution of Mexican Americans. The United States is a richer place, a more vibrant place, because people who have--claim Mexican heritage now are called United States citizens.”

George W. Bush, a former Governor of Texas, was a uniquely suited Republican in the age of nativist rhetoric and conservative white dominance among the right to speak to Latinos. President Bush would often deliver his weekly addresses in Spanish himself and received the highest percentage of the Latino vote in his 2004 re-election (44%) compared to any Republican since, Mitt Romney received just 27% of the Latino vote in 2012. The breakdown for historical voting rates for Latinos is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Vote for President, among Hispanics from 1972-2008

Vote for president, among Hispanics

	DEMOC..	REPUB..	INDEPE..	OTHER
1972	64%	34%	1%	1%
1976	76%	24%	0%	0%
1980	55%	37%	8%	0%
1984	62%	37%		1%
1988	69%	30%		1%
1992	61%	25%	14%	
1996	72%	21%	6%	2%
2000	62%	35%	3%	0%
2004	53%	44%	2%	1%
2008	67%	31%		2%

National exit polls

The 2004 George W. Bush presidential campaign produced an interesting video for the purposes of this study entitled *Presidente Bush: Nos Conocemos.* The video opens with visual shots of Bush walking his ranch in Crawford, TX while his own voiceover says, "before the Civil War, much of the American southwest was northern Mexico…and the people who lived there were not called Latinos or Hispanics, they were Mexican citizens." He acknowledges that many were treated as "foreigners in their own land." Bush cleverly argues that Mexicans and Mexican-Americans stayed in the United States and began to prosper in the face of racism and discrimination due to their "hard work" and "faith in God." He then pivots to include other groups in his communication, and says, "As our country grew, Cubans and Puerto Ricans" among other groups came to this country. In perhaps the most powerful line of the video, Bush says, "if the United States Hispanic population were a Latin American country it would be the third largest – *but it would also be the richest"* [Emphasis added]. Bush concludes his video with an argument that Latinos are fundamentally value (i.e. conservative value) driven people and that, logically, he deserves their vote. Bush here acknowledges the history of the Mexican-American war, racism in the past and rhetorically ties Latinos success in the United States (as the richest Latinos) to their cultural values.

However, during the administration of Obama, the president began to reference Latinos as a collective, despite speaking at a Mexican holiday event. For example in 2012, Obama stated, "right now there are more than 50 million Americans of Latino descent, one sixth of our population. You're our neighbors, our coworkers, our family, our friends. You're starting businesses. You're teaching in classrooms. You're defending

this country. You're driving America forward." Obama's remarks reference the 50 million Latinos in the United States. Mexican Americans comprise a majority, but not all of these Latinos. President Obama is the first president to deploy pan-ethnic rhetoric consistently. Through his rhetoric Obama symbolically constitutes a Latino electoral collective evoking Rodriguez's claim of the market efficient Latino abstraction.

President Obama, perhaps more than any other president, understands the complexities of race in politics. In his book, *The Audacity of Hope,* then Senator Obama dedicates an entire chapter to Race (227-270). He opens the chapter recounting how one of the most popular lines he would hear from people when he met them was from the speech from the 2004 Democratic National Convention. The distinctly post-racial rhetoric of the line seemed to appeal to many people: "there is not a black America and white America and Latino America and Asian America – there's the United States of America" (231). In the paragraphs that follow however, Obama displays a tenuous back and forth grappling with the issue of race, he acknowledges his own multi-racial ancestry while also challenging commenters who claim his 2004 speech represented an arrival at "postracial politics or that we already live in a color-blind society" (232). Obama recognizes and can separate the realities of the racial order in the United States, he says later, "To think clearly about race, then, requires us to see the world on a split screen – to maintain in our sights the kind of America that we want while looking squarely at America as it is, to acknowledge the sins of our past and the challenges of our present without becoming trapped in cynicism or despair" (233).

Throughout the rest of the chapter, Senator Obama often refers to "blacks and Latinos" together, casting their station in America with more similarity than compared to other groups. This is also a rhetorical move, perhaps to insulate himself from claims of only looking out for black Americans – a consistent criticism leveled at minority candidates, and the beginnings of creating the so called "Obama coalition" to capture Latino votes in critical swing states. Obama predictably discusses Latino specifically when it comes to talking about immigration, another common theme in Presidential rhetoric. He recounts the debate and controversy surrounding the 2006 immigration reform efforts, even revealing the powerful nativist strains in American culture that affect his own experience with Latinos. He says, "when I see Mexican flags waved at proimmigration demonstrations, I sometimes feel a flush of patriotic resentment" (266). Obama also recounts the frustration of working with immigration activists, especially displaying anger when activists accused his staffer of Chilean descent of "having forgotten where he came from – of not really being Latino" after he explained the Senator's position on a bill granting amnesty to a small group of Mexican nationals who had recently been deported (267). This anecdote is important in what it reveals, Obama has personally recounted his own frustration about being questioned regarding his authentic blackness.

Finally, Obama more than any other American President recognizes the changing racial makeup of the United States. Historians in the future may place his presidency as the official beginning of a majority "non-white" America. In the final paragraphs of his chapter on race, Obama says he recognizes his "daughters will speak Spanish and be the

better for it" (268). He remembers a young Latina in the third grade he met in Chicago who translated his English into Spanish for her parents. Obama ties her experience to the struggle of racial equality saying he hopes she "will learn about Rosa Parks and understand that the life of a black seamstress speaks to her own" (268). He concludes by saying he hopes "America is big enough to accommodate" the dreams of his daughter and of the young Latina he met in Chicago.

Presidents, more than any other group studied in this thesis, face powerful factors influencing their decisions. There are real foreign policy matters of security they must contend with, the pressure to maintain their voting coalition for re-election and their own limitations of power. Yet Presidents are rightly seen as the one most powerful individual in shaping real political and economic effects and forming distinct racial discursive formations. As seen in this study, President Kennedy faced serious concerns about the spread of Communism and framed his rhetoric around Latinos as both essentially foreign but useful subjects in maintaining Latin America as a non-communist region. President Johnson confronted an America tired of the racial inequality present since the founding of the nation and relied upon his experience with Mexican-Americans to inform his understanding of poverty and segregation. He rhetorically deployed Latinos as downtrodden people to highlight the inequalities of Blacks and advance his legislative agenda. President Bush also used Latinos to achieve re-election to the presidency, in part because of his past as Governor of Texas. He, like other Presidents, reframed the "qualities" of a Latino collective to advance his political agenda. In his case, arguing Latinos were essentially conservative and thus, logical supporters of his agenda for

America. Latinos in the early 2000's were also constrained by pressures to be patriotic and "support the troops," even as many of them were deployed to fight in Iraq and Afghanistan. President Obama inherited a racial order highly destabilized by the financial crash of 2009 and the immigration protests of 2006. In addition, Obama's own racial history contributed to a nuanced understanding of Latinos in the United States. Obama faces the pressure of maintaining his "Obama coalition" of voters, in which Latinos play a foundational role.

Latino Civic Organizations

Latino Civic Organizations have traditionally played a vital role in community affairs of American Latinos. In addition, these organizations also have engaged in negotiation and construction of the racial identity of the Latinos they claim to represent. For example, the League of Latin American Citizens (LULAC) argued in its early inception that Mexican-Americans and other Latino group's legal construction as racially white citizens entitled them to full rights instead of second-class citizens. This was a distinctly different rhetorical strategy than arguing for all groups regardless of race. The emergence of less assimilationist organizations such the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) directly countered LULAC by developing ethnic based claims of inclusion. The direct invocation of *la raza*, the people, makes a both a racial and political claim. Latinos are a separate racial group and must politically unite to achieve goals.

Recently, even more organizations have come to the forefront with a more specific goal of Latino voter mobilization. Mi Famila Vota and Voto Latino both have explicit goals of growing the Latino voting electorate. Remnants of the rhetoric from past groups remain in the communications and strategy of these new groups. LULAC and NCLR also continue to exist and advocate for Latino communities.

The following section examines the political communication rhetoric of these civic organizations around the 2014-midterm elections. Claims of collective action and power are evaluated along racializing frames of analysis.

METHODS

To investigate civic organization rhetoric towards and about U.S. Latinos, this article conducted a thematic analysis of press releases from a two-month frame before the 2014-midterm elections. Press releases were drawn from three organizations, LULAC, NCLR and Mi Familia Vota, while email communications were drawn from Voto Latino in lieu of available press releases. These four organizations were selected due to their prominence in advocating for current Latino issues, even if their historical foundation was oriented around Mexican-Americans.

The sample was comprised of press releases explicitly concerning the election. Press releases concerning immigration or other political issues were not considered. Overall, in a period between September 1st and November 4th, a total of 31 communications were issued. Mi Familia Vota issued the most with 13, followed by NCLR with 7, followed by Voto Latino with 6, with LULAC issuing the least amount with 5.

Once the sample was constituted, this article conducted a thematic analysis of the texts returned. Thematic analysis is a qualitative method that interprets texts through an emerging theoretical framework (Guest, McQueen, Namey 2012). In particular, this article is analyzing texts as proxies for the imagined US Latino audiences constructed by Latino Civic Organizations. The process of thematic analysis outlined by Bernard and Ryan is followed here; (1) texts were closely scrutinized, (2) preliminary themes were identified, (3) overarching structures were conceptualized and (4) theoretical models were constructed.

RESULTS

The primary overarching theme evident throughout the sampled press releases leading up to the 2014 mid term elections is referencing a collective "we." Rhetorically, this "we" is used by these organizations interchangeably with Latinos. For example, in a September 6th press release entitled "Mi Familia Vota Responds to President's Delay on Immigration Until After November Election," the organization warns "we will not remain silent," and "We will turn our frustration into action at the ballot boxes." In a similar vein, a press release entitled "NCLR Reminds Latino Voters That They Will Play a Critical Role in Midterm Elections" issued on the eve of election day by NCLR states, "we have to show politicians that Latino voters are a force to be reckoned with in every election."

The collective "we" is invoked as a synonym for what the organizations calls "the Latino community." Referring to the Latino community as a singular subject, rather than as plural subjects (i.e. Latino communities) is pan-ethnic rhetoric at work. These calls to action present the community as one monolithic entity. Interestingly, the rhetoric of these organizations creates a singular entity with emotions. For example, a press release from LULAC on September 29th states the "Latino community, which is 50 million strong, will show its disappointment in all politicians who subscribe to Ms. Ingraham's view of the world by using the power of its vote in November." This press releases follows "disparaging remarks" by conservative pundit Laura Ingraham "regarding Jose Diaz Balart and the DREAMers." LULAC's response ascribes emotions to an abstraction, in this case the Latino community being "disappointed."

Another recurring theme throughout the press releases is a reference to Latino's potential "power" at the ballot box. This rhetorical formation evokes the "sleeping giant" narrative of Latinos as a group of people not yet fully awakened in the American polity. However, this "power" is presented a mythical – something not yet materialized in reality. For example, a NCLR press release issued October 21st concerning the midterm election in Kansas stated "The Hispanic population may still be relatively small in Kansas, but we are politically powerful," meaning that "In November, we will be the difference and send a clear message to Kansas's politicians that the issues that matter to our community cannot be ignored." In the rhetoric of this press release, Latinos have a potential power that lawmakers should fear.

This power is also constructed as a healing mechanism. For example in a press release issued on October 13th entitled "Tens of Thousands of Latinos in CO and NV Urged to Register to Vote Before Tuesday's Deadline for Nov. 4 Election" issued by Mi Familia Vota states "the Latino community understands that we need to show up and vote to make our voices heard and to break the political gridlock on so many issues that affect our communities." Here the power of the Latino vote is cast as cure for the ills of a polarized nation, as something magical.

There were also cases of rhetoric, which while still referring to a singular "Latino community," at least acknowledged difference. The differences identified were regarding ideology and party. For example a press release issued by Mi Familia Vota on September 17th states, "We want to be clear that we are not recruiting voters for any political party."

There is a recurring theme of advocating Latinos to vote, while at the same time stating it does not matter which party or candidate they vote for.

Finally, communications issued by Voto Latino (through email) refrained from evoking a singular Latino community. Several reasons for this deviance from expected models are accounted for. First, Voto Latino primarily targets and organizes young people online, resulting in an individualist frame. Second, email communications differ from the audiences of press releases, as press releases are used to influence the mainstream media narratives on a particular subject. Maria Teresa Kumar, the CEO of Voto Latino, is even quoted in a press release from Mi Familia Vota saying "We are calling American Latinos to rise above our political differences and to unite as a community this November," which is a rhetorical appeal that never appears in any email communications from Voto Latino.

Spanish Language Newspapers

The ongoing effort of audience construction discussed in "Racial Formation of U.S. Latinos" (pg. 5) is being conducted by an elite corps of Latino journalists and marketers who intend to create a marketable entity where goods and services can more efficiently delivered and consumed. Rodriguez here asserts that "Hispanic audience research is constructed by one class of Latinos, college educated and professionally salaried, symbolically reproducing a saleable product out of the "mass" of U.S. Latinos, more than half of whom have not completed high school, and whose median household income is roughly three quarters that of the general U.S. population" (20). This analysis of Spanish Language news, particularly Spanish print media because of the difficulty in obtaining Univision or other television transcripts, focuses on the question of denationalization. *Denationalization* refers to a process in which the sending country's (México, Colombia, Republica Dominicana, etc.) national identity is shed in order to partially assimilate and create "U.S. Latinos" as a separate and distinct racial minority group.

Latino journalists are confronted with some particular challenges not necessarily faced by mainstream journalists, namely competing loyalties to objectivity and community advocacy (Matsaganis & Katz 2013). Yet, it is clear that the imagined communities, macro-political narratives, style, format, topicality and focus of United States Latino journalism sets common agendas and outlooks. Recent research on Latino journalism has demonstrated there is a level of audience reciprocity at play, where readers and journalists interact and develop agendas for their localities.

In moments of international crisis, such as the Elian Gonzalez case, comparative studies of The Miami Herald and El Nuevo Herald demonstrated differentiated expressions of ideological, ethnic and national identity present in Miami, FL (Guzmán 2006). Neoliberal narratives of citizenship and political agency are present in the news agencies covering the 2006 immigration protests, and subsequentially were reflected in the pro-immigration discourses (Baker-Cristales 2009). Spanish language cable news has been found to have an agenda setting effect in McAllen, TX, a community with a high proportion of Latinos (Ghanem & Wanta 2010). Latinos who primarily access Spanish language news, which presents immigration issues in more positive and informative manners, tend to have more pro-immigrant views than Latinos who primarily access English language news (Abrajano & Singh 2009).

Finally, spatial proximity plays an important role in the content and tone of local news agencies. Proximity to the United States-Mexico border generates higher volume of articles about Latino immigration, articles featuring the negative aspects of immigration, and articles regarding illegal immigration (Branton & Dunaway 2009). When covering the Mexican drug conflicts of the late 2000's, local Border papers were more likely to present less pessimistic and negative viewpoints (Lacasse & Forster 2012).

METHODS

The sample is drawn from two weeks of *El Diario de El Paso, La Opinion* and *El Nuevo Herald* front-page stories. These three papers were selected based on the wide circulation of each; La Opinion and El Nuevo Herald have the largest circulation in the United States while El Diario has the largest on the U.S.-Mexico border. Each front page

contained 4-5 stories. Only front page stories were sampled to gage what the editors of the paper thought to be the most important stories of the day to be and also to simply not replicate the structure of the paper, which is divided into Local, National, International and Opinion sections.

The method of analysis utilized in this study is a content analysis, followed by a thematic analysis that identifies larger themes instead of specific words. The content analysis focuses on counting the number of front-page stories about the United States versus stories about other Latin American countries. This section of the data would test Rodriguez's claim that Spanish news denationalizes U.S. Latinos from their country of origin. The operationalization of each code is presented as follows under a description of the category:

(I) **United States:** This category broadly refers to events that take place in the United States. This includes developments in Texas, California, Florida and their respective state capitols along with Washington D.C.

(II) **Latin America:** This category broadly refers to events that take place anywhere in Latin America. This includes developments throughout México, Cuba and the rest of Latin America.

(III) **United States & Latin America:** This category encoded stories that cover relationships between the two countries.

(IV) **Other:** This category broadly refers to front-page stories that occur in regions outside of the United State and Latin America. This includes Europe, Asia,

Africa, Oceania and other North America countries. This also includes events that are international such as the United Nations, or outside of the purview the Nation-State, such as the Catholic Church. Finally, this category is meant to be exhaustive to include any story that does not clearly fit into any other category.

(V) **Supplemental Code – Locality:** After the coding of a story's geographic focus, a story is then coded for a second time to determine if it is about the locality it is published in (Los Angeles, El Paso or Miami).

RESULTS

Following Rodriguez's analysis of making Latino news, which simultaneously denationalizes and assimilates Latinos into the United States, it should be expected front-page stories from the Spanish language papers will follow a U.S. dominant pattern. The results from *El Diario, La Opinion* and *El Nuevo Herald* support Rodriguez's claim in some ways and challenge it in others. Taking the 3 papers together on average, there was usually one story dedicated to Latin American affairs while the vast majority focused either on local or American affairs. However, separately *El Nuevo Herald* featured many more stories about Latin America and U.S./Latin America affairs. While coverage of Latin American affairs is almost non-existent in mainstream English newspapers, there relative absence in Spanish newspapers was surprising. In sum, 162 stories were returned from the 2-week sample collected in April. The breakdown of the sample is below:

Table 6: Spanish Newspaper Subject Returns

Geographic Focus	Frequency	Percentage
United States	99	61%
Latin America	28	17%
U.S./Latin America	34	21%
Other	1	>1%
TOTAL	162	100%

El Nuevo Herald, the Spanish newspaper published in South Florida and is owned by the same parent company as the Miami Herald. *El Nuevo Herald* is the second largest daily Spanish language paper in the United States. Compared to the other papers sampled in this study, *El Nuevo Herald* featured more stories about Latin America as a proportion and more stories about U.S. and Latin American relations. This represents an unexpected deviation from the expected norm according the Rodriguez and exemplified in *El Opinion* and *El Diario.* According to the U.S. Census Bureau, over 50% of Miami-Dade residents are foreign born, while 25% of El Paso residents and 35% of Los Angeles residents are foreign born. Miami is often called the "Capital of Latin America," which combined with its high foreign born population of Cubans, Central Americans and South Americans may help explain why *El Nuevo Herald* consistently publishes more stories about Latin America. The sample of *El Nuevo Herald* is featured in Table 7:

Table 7: *El Nuevo Herald* Returns

Geographic Focus	Frequency	Percentage
United States	18	40%
Latin America	9	20%
U.S./Latin America	18	40%
Other	0	0%
TOTAL	45	100%

In addition, compared to the other papers, El Nuevo Herald has a significantly lower amount of local stories as seen in Table 8:

Table 8: Amount of local stories in *El Nuevo Herald*

Geographic Focus	Frequency	Percentage
United States	10	55%
U.S./Latin America	2	11%
TOTAL Local	12	27%

Compared to *El Nuevo Herald*, *El Opinion* published in Los Angeles follows Rodriguez's claims more consistently. The vast majority of front-page stories were published about United States, of which a significant amount concerned local developments. The former publisher of the paper, Ignacio E. Lozano, Jr., was quoted as saying "our mission was no longer to be a Mexican newspaper published in Los Angeles, but an American newspaper that happens to be published in Spanish" on the paper's website. The breakdown of stories is seen in Table 9:

Table 9: *El Opinion* returns

Geographic Focus	Frequency	Percentage
United States	41	65%
Latin America	17	27%
U.S./Latin America	4	6.3%
Other	1	1.6%
TOTAL	63	100%

Most of the stories El Opinion publishes about the United States also concern local issues as seen in Table 10.

Table 10: Amount of local stories in *El Opinion*

Geographic Focus	Frequency	Percentage
United States	28	68%
TOTAL Local	28	44%

In addition, an interesting style choice the paper employs that tracks with Rodriguez's claim is the use of the word Latino to describe subjects in its stories. For example, a story about a local man killed by LAPD police used Latino to describe him (see figure 2).

Figure 2: “Latino” subject in *El Opinion*

El Diario de El Paso, published in El Paso, TX is the largest Spanish newspaper published on the U.S.-Mexico border. Similar to *El Opinion*, most of *El Diario* front-page stories are about events in the United States. The stories about Latin American almost always details event in Ciudad Juarez, the city on the other side of the border. The sample can be seen in table 11.

Table 11: *El Diario de El Paso* returns

Geographic Focus	Frequency	Percentage
United States	40	74%
Latin America	2	3.7%
U.S./Latin America	12	22.22%
Other	0	0%
TOTAL	54	100%

The overwhelming majority of stories about the United States on the front page of *El Diario* are local. When stories focus on state or national issues, they are always contextualized in terms of local concerns. For example, a story entitled "*Tras 14 semanas, estan listos para el Marathon de Boston*," detailed El Pasoans (or *Pasenos* as the paper refers to its subjects) participation in the Boston Marathon. Similar stories appeared about the Texas legislature, fracking and water issues, and immigration. Results for local stories can be seen in table 12.

Table 12: Amount of local stories in *El Diario de El Paso*

Geographic Focus	Frequency	Percentage
United States	39	97.5%
U.S./Latin America	1	8.33%
TOTAL Local	40	74%

Topically, the stories presented no big surprises. There was an almost even representation of political, business, entertainment, sports and weather related stories. However, one prominent detail was evident. In line with Rodriguez's observation that Spanish news places Latinos prominently in news stories they would not otherwise be featured in, many front pages stories feature a Latino person as the subject of the story. For example, a story in El Opinion about disabled children and their school choices features a Latina as the subject (see figure 3)

Figure 3: A Latina featured in a El Opinion story

Otherwise, Latinos are seen enjoying a baseball game as a family in *El Diario,* protesting to raise the minimum wage in *El Opinion*, and even "have similar foreign policy opinions as Americans" according to a front page story in *El Nuevo Herald.* For example, the appointment of a new president for the University of Miami who is Hispanic can be seen in figure 4:

Figure 4: Latinos are news for *El Nuevo Herald*

This section has explored the emergence of Latino pan-ethnicism in the United States and the associated rhetorical formations that accompany the construction of pan-ethnicism by Spanish Language newspapers. In addition the construction of pan-ethnic rhetoric was conceptualized as a hegemonic force exerting pressure on Latino subjects in the United States. These papers assume their publication in Spanish means they are speaking to Latinos – for *El Opinion* calls its story subjects Latinos and celebrates them. Latinos are figured into stories small and large, placing them as visible subjects in the United States but apart from the mainstream. In addition, the events of Latin America that are published in *El Opinion* and *El Diario* front pages are typically focused on crime and the drug cartels, while other developments are ignored. This has an effect of separating the experience of those living in the United States and those living in Latin America, so that one is seen is unsafe and dangerous, while the U.S. is seen as home.

Latino Youth

A recent article in *BuzzFeed* entitled "What Latino Means To Me: This Is How Latinos In America Actually Identify" showed 60 photos of young Latinos holding up handwritten signs about their identity. Many of the signs did not neatly fit into the pan-ethnic discourses that mainstream politicians and organizations deploy. Instead, what is shown reflects a tremendous amount of regional diversity amongst U.S. Latinos and importantly, diversity within regional communities about self-identification. For example, in the photos from New York people identify as Latinos, Puerto Ricans, Boricuas, New Yorkers including the boroughs, Mexican, Nuyorican, and many others in a small sample (see Figure 5). Similar examples of difference were found among the photos from California and Texas.

Figure 5: #WhatLatinoMeansToMe for a young girl in New York

What does this signify? At first glance, the photos seem to confirm the survey results from Pew that indicated most American Latinos identify with their national identity (Mexican, Colombian, Puerto Rican, etc.) while a small minority identify as Latinas and Latinos. However, these pictures also begin to circumscribe some of qualities and characteristics of pan-ethnic Latino culture. In this way, #WhatLatinoMeansToMe opens up valuable ways of looking at how people self identify in their own way rather than respond to survey questions or check census boxes. This is not to say that those strict forms of collecting data are not useful or valuable, but rather that by placing the onus on the person to "fill in the blank" new important information can be collected. While there may be less data coherence, as theoretically responses to #WhatLatinoMeansToMe could be anything, there is value in incoherence – it showcases the true diversity of Latino identity in America (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: How #WhatLatinoMeansToMe shows diversity

The following section explores the ways young Latinos in the United States grapple with their racial, national, regional and cultural self-identification. This section goes hand in hand with the "official" ways of understanding Latino identity by investigating how young people represent themselves on social media. There are many factors at play, what audience does young Latinos imagine they are speaking to? How do they reinforce hegemonic discourses and how do they resist them? The value of this section is to determine to what extent Latino youth identify with pan-ethnic themes, how they resist them, and how they fashion their own identities. In addition, how do the self-representations under these hashtags make a specific political argument? Or do Latino youth refrain from making political arguments? What is the scope of their deconstructive (or constructive) claims?

METHODS

Using the twitter analysis service Topsy, tweets using the hashtag #WhatLatinoMeansToMe from the month of September were collected. Original tweets were then coded for content across three dimensions; race, region, culture. These three categories were chosen to approximate the most common ways Latino youth talk about what "it means to be Latino." Tweets are counted to have a racial dimension if the tweet directly invokes race to be constitutive of Latino identity. This includes using the terms white, black, indian (indio) or any other racial group. This also includes any terms like mixed-race or mestizo. Tweets are counted to have a regional dimension when they directly invoke regional heritage or origin to be constitutive of Latino identity. This includes use of regional U.S. terms like Texas (Tejas) or New York. This also includes

the use of national origin terms like Mexican (Mexican-Americans). Finally, tweets are counted to have a cultural dimension if a tweet invokes a cultural characteristic to be constitutive of Latino identity. This includes refers to cultural customs like food, dance, music or language. This also refers to qualities ascribed to culture like hard-working, loving or other adjectives.

Finally, after the content analysis of these selected tweets, this section also devotes a thematic analysis to the most consistently appearing themes and rhetorical formations of the tweets of Latino youth.

RESULTS

Using the data service Topsy to search for #WhatLatinoMeansToMe, 23 original tweets were returned. All tweets were in English. Meta data such as retweets and replies were not counted. The following table represents a frequency of the tweets. Tweets could be counted as demonstrating all three dimension or none of the dimensions. For example, a tweet could both have a regional and cultural dimension, as seen in Table 13.

Table 13: Tweet Dimensions

Dimension	Frequency	Percentage
Race	3	13%
Region/Nation	15	65%
Culture	22	95%

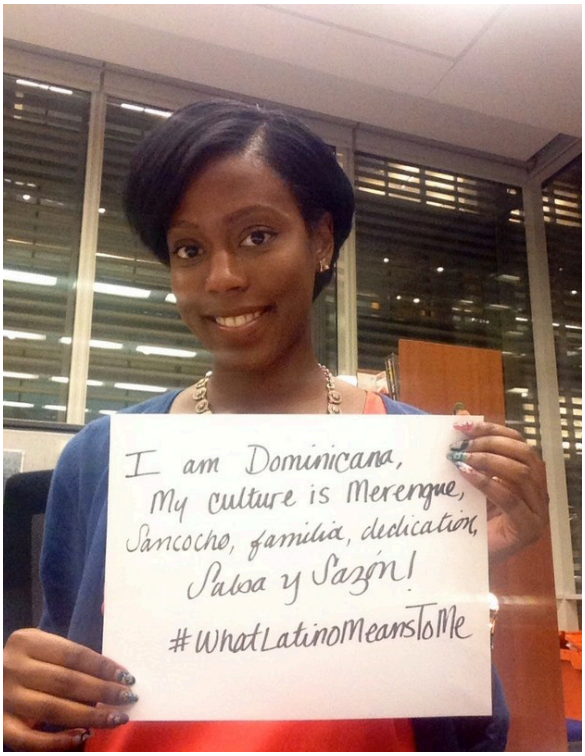
The vast majority of tweets demonstrated an understanding of Latino identity that was tied to a cultural dimension. For example, one tweet said Latino means, "Working hard every day, striving for a better future not just for you, but for your family" showing the user to imagine the values of hard work and providing for family to constitute Latino identity. The most common occurrence was tweets that mixed regional/national identification with a cultural value. For example, one user said, "Being damn proud of being Salvadorian American and embracing the loving, vibrant culture❤" constitutes their Latino identity. Indeed this pairing of regional/national identity with culture is powerful, as demonstrated in the table below.

Table 14: Tweet Dimension Pairings

Dimension	Frequency	Percentage
Region/Nation AND Culture	13	43%
Region/Nation BUT NOT Culture	1	4%
Culture BUT NOT Region/Nation	8	35%

At first glance, this seems to confirm Pew Research data showing the majority of U.S. Latinos identify with their regional and national identities. It also seems to demonstrate the national projects of sending countries (i.e. Mexican Nationalism) have residual effects of how U.S. Latinos understand their identity via salient cultural values. These salient cultural values are expressed as "we work hard," "we are proud," and we "have culture" through food and music (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: #WhatLatinoMeansToMe tying national and cultural identification



The absence of racial identification in response to #WhatLatinoMeansToMe also presents some questions. It is clear that the respondents to the hashtag (and the youth pictured in the *Buzzfeed* article) understand that Latino identity is a tangible concept. Yet, there were only two tweets that mentioned race, both in terms of black racial identity in their Latino identity. Does this signify that Latino identity is viewed as its own distinct racial category separate from the black-white dichotomy? This would seem to indicate pan-ethnic racialization at work in how these youth understand their identity. However, it also seems that for many of the respondents, their racial identity is no different than their national identity. For them, and many other U.S. Latinos, their race is Mexican or Puerto

Rican. This represents an important dissonance between the racial language of official actors, seen in the previous chapters, and the reality.

Conclusions

> *"But it is not enough to stand on the opposite river bank, shouting questions, challenging patriarchal, white conventions. A counterstance locks one into a duel of oppressor and oppressed, locked in mortal combat, like the cop and the criminal, both are reduced to a common denominator of violence. The counterstance refutes the dominant culture's views and beliefs, and, for this, it is proudly defiant. All reaction is limited by, and dependent on, what it is reacting against. Because the counterstance stems from a problem with authority – outer as well as inner – it's a step towards liberation from cultural domination. But it is not a way of life. At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite river bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once and, at once, see through serpent and eagle eyes. Or perhaps we will decide to disengage from the dominant culture, write it all off altogether as a lost cause, and cross the border into a wholly new and separate territory. Or we might go another route. The possibilities are endless once we decide – to act and not react."*
>
> Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

Despite symbols of progress, racial questions in American society are far from resolved. Our original sins of slavery and colonization remain in the background, ever present. The challenges of this moment in time are similar to those of past eras but are also unique to our time. Global movements of people, labor and capitol have changed the world in which America confronts its past. In the midst of all this, American is changing in its demographic and racial makeup. These changes are transforming the way political leaders have talked about the people they govern and draw their support from. Latinos have "emerged" on the national stage according to pundits and leaders, and their language is quickly evolving and adjusting to this new reality. This moment, a reframing of the racial order in the United States, prompted this study. The original question of this work remains *how have political actors constructed (or deconstructed) Latino pan-*

ethnicism through their rhetoric and communication? This multi-method investigation found official actors, Presidents, Civic organizations and Spanish newspapers constructing pan-ethnic rhetoric to their benefit. At the same time, this study found young Latinos themselves resisting the narrative themselves and producing a dissonance between the official language and how people actually self-identify. These findings complicate the way Latino acculturation and assimilation is talked about in the public sphere. The preeminent worry is these new immigrants and their descendants will not adapt to the mainstream of America, yet this work uncovers some of the ways the American political system is categorizing Latinos into silos that will necessarily always leave them out. This work also adds to the academic understanding of racial formation and how the political and economic circumstances of a time can transform people who were racialized on one continent one way and racialized in a completely different way in their new home.

To gain a sense of this transformation, this work studied 4 different groups of political actors to gage their command of racial language construction. Using a content and thematic analysis of public papers from presidential administrations since Kennedy, the specific ways in which Presidents used terms like "Latino" or "Mexican-American" was traced through historical developments. The press releases of major Latino civic organizations were scrutinized for the ways their rhetoric attempted to mobilize the Latino abstraction to accomplish certain political goals. The focus of front-page stories in local Spanish newspapers was counted to test the claim that American Spanish news denationalizes Latinos from sending countries. Finally, tweets by Latino youth were

analyzed to see how dominant themes of Latino identity were processed and understood on social media.

Consistent themes emerged across the 4 data sets. Rhetorical formations cast Latinos are foreigners; said they have certain cultural qualities like “hard work” and “love of family,” argued a predominance of Spanish over English, and finally prophesized their political participation would heal the nation. Latino pan-ethnic rhetoric became the dominant language in recent presidential administrations, from Clinton through Obama. Civic organizations deployed Latinos and the collective “we” interchangeably, endowing a Latino abstraction with emotions such as anger and distrust, to mobilize for the 2014-midterm elections. Reviewing a two-week sample of Spanish language newspapers front-page stories showed that in the cities of Los Angeles and El Paso, news focused on developments in the United States and focused very little on developments in Latin America. Conversely, the news in Miami, a city with a high foreign-born population, did focus on Latin American stories. Finally, Latino youth on twitter demonstrated fluency with some of the dominant themes of Latino pan-ethnicism. They quickly highlighted that cultural values like “hard work” constituted “what Latino means to me.” Yet, they also consistently talked about their national Mexican, Puerto Rican, Dominican and South American heritage as what Latino meant to them. This defied the rhetoric of official actors who denationalize Latinos and renationalize them as second-class Americans. In sum, the racializing language of pan-ethnicism is uneven. It is being used by different officials in different ways, whether its politicians seeking to capture votes or Spanish newspapers creating a market. Audiences are receiving it

unevenly, some adopt the language and others resist it and revert to the powerful nationalist languages of Latin America. Finally and perhaps most importantly, some audiences and practitioners may benefit unevenly from pan-ethnic rhetoric – the privileged, the lighter skinned, those best suited to move up the racial hierarchy win and the darker skinned, marginalized lose.

The potential for further investigation in this area is rich with possibility. The limitations of this particular work are opportunities for future research. The small sample size of twitter subjects should be expanded and considered in a more holistic way. The exploration of how Latino youth grapple with their racial identity in America, one that is not as clear as black versus white, deserves an entire study. Future research can also expand the differences in rhetorical appeals Presidential candidates make when asking Latino communities for their votes versus when they are in office. Future elections will present greater opportunities to capture this data and understand its use. It can also begin to highlight the differences in how Republicans and Democrats talk about Latinos. In addition, there are many actors who this study did not look at. National political parties, local non-elected leaders, activists on social media, Latino academics and many more actors all shape the language used to talk about Latinos.

The Anzaldúa quote at the beginning of this section, from the concluding chapter of her seminal work *Borderlands,* helps frame the conclusion of this study. The choice to use pan-ethnic rhetoric places people into the well-established games of racial subjugation and strife that have characterized America for years. The rules and outcomes of the old racial order, which exert so much power and influence over the systems of

governance, information and capitol in this country, are known to us while little is done to address them. Activists rightly raise their voices and organize to combat injustice, but their sound and fury seem to signify nothing to those with power. No doubt their action is needed, but to Anzaldúa's point, a shift in consciousness is needed much more desperately. The frames in which Latinidad is understood in American political rhetoric serve the few at the expense of the many. A more fundamental understanding of how race comes to be created and maintained, and then becomes real for whites, blacks and Latinos, needs to be had. The work of challenging and developing new knowledge about race and Latinos must be done. This work, as an intervention, is a beginning, but more must be done.

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Vita

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